Harold

Dear Dave, 9/24/79

When you phoned yesterday I told you I'd be writing you about the WSLRC Commission file, 62-109090 when I completed reading it. You also asked about my health and I told you it is about as it has been. Because of the increased unsteadiness and dizziness, which existed when I lean over at my desk, some time back I decided to read all of the Commission file I'd not read because I could do that with minimal bending of the head, if somewhat awkwardly.

I finished reading the file this morning. This in haste because as soon as it is light enough I'll be out doing some kind of work, that appearing to be good treatment. I'm adapting to what I can't do and learning what I should not do and I do what I can. My plans for today are to continue bring firewood and local cut to post length that I may be able to sell up to the house, perhaps completing this chore. I've made a cart that my garden tractor can pull if I'm careful to switch my weigh with the contour of the ground so a wheel doesn't spin and if I can lift one end of the log to get it on the axle of the gadget and tie it in place I can pull it. With the trailer I've learned that if I stack the cut firewood so that the weight is on the hitch of the tractor I can hal a fair load, so I've already stacked perhaps two cord of wood that doesn't need splitting near the house. I've more to get cut down but of what is cut all that does x require spilliting is what remains. It is heavier and I'll be seeing how much bending and lifting while bent I can still do. I'm trying to get all out of the way for more tree felling, which will be by my angina neighbor. With my arthritic neighbor, who has a good mechanical sense, I've been shopping periodically for gadgets that can enable to me coexist with my problems and still do what I want to do, like tongs with which I can pick up stones while cleaning up the land, means of holding them on the mowers, etc.

So, I'm adding out and getting exercise and getting the place in better shape and feeling pretty good for it.

Gradually there appears to be some benefit from the new vascular dilator I'm on. The doctor to whom I was sent on a consultation about a month ago says the dosage can safely be doubled if there are no side effects and there have been none so I guess this is a good indication.

There are countless topics for special studies in all these files, of course. One of the major problems is their vastness. The FBI knew what it was doing in dumping them all on me in substitution for complying with my subject requests. The bulk of the paper effectively denies access. So I've been expanding what I include in the subject files of copies I established some time ago. Ray tells me that I now have four file drawers of JFK materials in subject files. These will go some kind of guide and index because I already have a means of locating every section and serial in a card index Ray has made and for the Not Recorded Serials in most cases, all where I remembered, I added the Section Number to the copy.

Politically the Commission file is important, even though it is largely of records that are duplicated in other files. To a large degree it consists of copies of letters to and from the Commission. Here the FBI annotations are of interest Because it is not as large as the Oswald or Assassination files it lends itself more readily to advanced study, for a theses, etc.

How the FBI works is fairly well disclosed in it. How Hoover thought to a degree, complicated by the question posed to me by a retire agent, was the Palace Guard, as he called them, then in control of him? I don't know because his annotations are sometime subject to the interpretation he was covering himself and being self-serving. However, from my knowledge of what was included in the records that reached him, internal HQ records, I'm inclined to believe that he was under control. The means was controlling what he was told, what he knew and could understand and believe.

Outright lies are not common. More common is angling what went up through the bureaucracy and omissions of what was know and was pertinent. This, of course, also influenced what those immediately under him knew and believed, like the Assistant Directors whose supervisors prepared the memos. (In recent days I've started a card file identifying them so those reading the records will have a pretty good idea of who drafted them from the initials. They will also be able to identify those to whom copies were directed from this. I've also started a card file of other files, by number, where I can identify them.)

Almost everything begins with praise of the FBI and Hoover and refers to its ~~xxx~~ tremenduous efforts. Rankin bowed thrice as he began each letter and all records of phone conversations begin with someone on the Commission doing the same thing.

If someone belched a mild criticism of the FBI or even what could be taken as one there was an erupting volcano at FBI HQ. Beginning with a file search on the person. Then the bureaucracy covered the FBI's ass one way or another. It was always creating paper it could retrieve it justify itself or attack someone. (This extended to the entire Commission staff! There is a 16-page memo noting ~~x~~ derogatory information in the FBI's files on the staff.

The files searches extended to kids and housewives who wrote the FBI about the Commission's Report. The letters, no matter how irrational, were all retyped for Hoover, who was always told if the files held anything derogatory. Yet there is also his note in which he refused to read the Commission's 26 pages of comment on the FBI. He claimed he didn't have time to read that much- give him a summary!

Covering the FBI and getting out what it wanted out, always angled and clearly leaked in the important instances, were a major operation. I'm establishing a separate file on this. The p.r. was the Deloach operation, and he knew what he was doing and he was effective at it. From the press to the Congress to the White House, he made his way around. Their leaking of Hoover's Commission testimony before it was published was for them very effective because they had so many in the press on whom they could depend. In turn copies were sent to all who wrote favorably. It was a major and a costly operation from what little is reflected in these files. The real story of this operation, and it is a major part of the overall story, is in the Deloach files.

To a degree I cannot now evaluate this is in 94 files. I'm inclined to believe that much remained in his Division, then called Crime Records. (They mastered Orwell early.) Deloach in particular knew how to reach Hoover's mind, although they all did.

I could not make separate files on this because of their volume. Meaning complete files. I have what I think will be enough for at least the beginning of a real study. Also, many file references are eliminated in the xeroxing, by illegibility or by mechanically copying off center.

There is a remarkable self-portrayal of Hoover and Tolson in their notes. When this became apparent I started making a separate file of all the legible notes, rather records holding those notes. (Tolson was almost a second Hoover. I can't recall an instance in which Hoover disagreed with him. With those immediately under Tolson, I doubt there is any agency in which the higher subordinates could have hit the boss with the degree of accuracy of what he wanted to hear and do. However, he did countermand them on occasion. Always politically and relating to p.r. And this is what dominated all.

There is a basic and I'm confident deliberate lie permeating all of this stuff, that prior to the assassination the FBI had no indication of any predisposition toward violence by Oswald. In fact he wrote nasty a note just before the assassination and the FBI, including HQ, suppressed the entire thing until it was leaked, which was not until after SAC (Dallas) Shanklin's retirement was secure. They they controlled all investigations of this. I already have a separate file on that, a large one.

After 12 years of total suppression all the many accounts are that Oswald did threaten violence. By then the FBI had accomplished its original purpose of covering itself and was able to continue to cover itself through its internal and the Congressional investigations.

While this investigation is not reflected in the Commission file it is in others and the Commission file does include a full account of what the FBI did to Chief Curry, who first made indication of this public. And how they did it.

The FBI's relations with and attitude toward the Commission are fairly fully included in the Commission file. Complete with Hoover's paranoia about those he didn't like, like Warren. When Warren invited him to a private lunch before he testified Hoover found it suspicious that Warren was friend, gracious and praised the great amount of work the FBI did for the Commission. For that matter when the ACLU said what was in accord with the FBI's position on the Commission's criticism of it Hoover noted that they'd better keep their guard up. (The FBI actually presented itself as dedicated to preserving the rights of all and or never transgressing against the rights of any.)

Often the FOIA processing is bad. Some can be for mere harassment, some can come from intransigence but I'm satisfied that much is deliberate covering up. I'm not able to appeal all the unjustified "national security" withholdings and they clearly are usually covering up, especially in Mexico. The pretense is protecting their well-known and non-secret operations there. Often this also is done by referrals to the CIA, which then does not act on them and still hasn't.

Clearly control is the name of the FBI's game. My separate file on this is probably the largest single one. It was quite an operation. However, aspects may not be apparent because it required detailed subject knowledge. Some is pretty transparent and the average bright student will perceive it, judging from Mae's reactions.

I wish I had time for more now but a beautiful day is starting and the sun is up enough for me to start the work that I need and intersperse with periods of working inside the house.

Do not underestimate the importance of this file from the great amount of crap in it. It is mostly crap, with bureaucratic necessities making up the next largest portion, necessary record-keeping, of what went to the Commission and what came back and where it was placed. My judgement was correct when I had to limit what I was doing and fixed on this one to read. (Since Mae has been helping me I've been able to keep records of what I read and when I read it. Ive read large portions of the other files and all of this one. Probably all of the smaller ones, like Marina and Ruby, and every word from the field offices.)

If you have questions, ask them.

Best,